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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, March 20, 2003

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**Van Woerkom's Bill to Increase Agricultural Renaissance Zones  
Passed by Senate Committee**  
*Senate Bill 163 doubles the number of tax-free zones from ten to twenty*

LANSING – The Senate Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism Committee today favorably reported out legislation to increase the number of Agricultural Renaissance Zones in Michigan, bill sponsor and Chairman Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores, announced.

“The agricultural industry provides families in West Michigan with opportunities to raise families, pay bills and carry on family traditions,” Van Woerkom said. “Michigan must do more to ensure that the economic stimulus we are working to provide for our local economies also works for our farmers.”

If passed into law, Senate Bill 163 would increase the number of tax-free agricultural renaissance zones from ten to twenty. The zones exempt qualified agriculture processors, who want to expand their business or bring new job opportunities for workers into Michigan, from all state and local taxes for up to fifteen years.

The zones were also created to maintain the profitability of Michigan farmer's products.

“The existing agricultural renaissance zones are already assisting West Michigan farmers,” Van Woerkom said. “This bill allows us to build on these successes.”

SB 163 was reported out by a vote of 4-0. The bill will now be sent to the full Senate for consideration.